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THESIS

**SUCCESSION PLANNING IN HOMELAND SECURITY –
HOW CAN WE ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE TRANSFER OF
KNOWLEDGE TO A NEW GENERATION OF
EMPLOYEES?**

by

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March 2010

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ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE TO A NEW
GENERATION OF EMPLOYEES?**

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ABSTRACT

In the past five years, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) has seen the mass retirements of tenured, experienced personnel and the hiring of new generations. Because a large percentage of the department is currently eligible for retirement, this trend will continue over the next five to seven years. The drain of experience and knowledge will directly affect the operational capabilities of the department, as well as our nation's homeland security.

Through the use of case studies, the research will examine how the LAFD can maximize institutional memory, and transfer this knowledge to a new generation of employees. The practical significance of this project is to 1) identify the challenges of current succession planning of the LAFD; 2) identify solutions to these challenges through evaluating precedent cases; and 3) develop a conceptual and tailored succession planning guide based on identified solutions.

In today's world, the workforce is an organization's most important asset, often differentiating highly successful agencies from those that struggle. By developing a succession planning guide that focuses on assessment, development, identification and selection, organizations can align its goals with its human capital needs and ensure it can keep pace with the complexities in homeland security.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Tuesday, September 11, 2001, dawned temperate and nearly cloudless in the eastern United States. Millions of men and women readied themselves for work. Some made their way to the twin towers, the signature structures of the World Trade Center complex in New York City. Others went to Arlington, Virginia, to the Pentagon.

(The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 Page 1)

Even before the dust had settled and anyone had a chance to grieve, companies and public safety agencies had to face the sobering fact that they had lost key personnel who were on the planes, in the buildings or on the ground. Experts estimate that the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) lost 4,400 years of experience the day of the attacks (Marquez, 2006).

This solemn example illustrates the need for a comprehensive succession plan. Whether it is a foreseeable exit of employees or due to an overnight disaster, either can leave an organization crippled if not dealt with appropriately.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the last five years, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) has seen the mass retirements of tenured experienced personnel, and the hiring of new generations (UFLAC Local 112, 2008). Because a large percentage of the department is currently eligible for retirement, this trend will continue over the next five to seven years. The drain of experience and knowledge will directly affect the operational capabilities of the department, as well as our nation's homeland security. With this pending wave of retirements, the effective transfer of knowledge to a new generation of employees is crucial for the long-term success of the LAFD. Succession planning will ensure that this transfer is institutionalized and passed on to that next generation.

Succession planning is a plan an organization uses to fill its most critical leadership and professional positions. It involves forecasting vacancies, developing a talent pool, and selecting the right personnel for those critical positions in order to support the organization's strategy. Succession

planning also details processes for transferring institutional knowledge and preserving institutional memory. These plans have been used for decades in the private sector, but are less likely to be developed or implemented in the public domain. (Garman & Glawe, 2004)

Preparing future leaders through succession planning requires attention to generational differences. For years, sociologists have reported that significant attitudinal differences exist between members of the “Traditionalists” (born prior to 1946), Baby Boom generation (those born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Y also known as Millennial (those born between 1980 and 1994). Currently all four of these generations are working side by side on the LAFD. Management experts warn that it is important for managers to know and understand the differences to avoid the conflict and problems that may result, as well as developing methods to ensure that the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next continue.

Over the past 25 years, most of the career positions in the LAFD were created and filled by people born between 1946 and 1964 (UFLAC 2008). These firefighters, due to their youth and number, were largely responsible for establishing the department’s culture, operations, and performance levels. Within the next five years, 40% of the command officers and 23% of the workforce will retire, leaving a significant labor and management void. The exodus of baby boom supervisors will require the remaining employees to cope with the stresses of changing cultural climates, in addition to their normative job stresses.

The LAFD uses an informal succession plan to prepare candidates to assume the specific roles and responsibilities of a given position. For the most part, this is accomplished through self-selection and not at the direction of the department. Members in the organization choose their career path and move up through the organization through their own self-will. This broad goal is accomplished by providing candidates internal training programs, promotional preparation courses, leadership, and mentored training. To ensure long-term sustainability, this informal network of succession planning needs to be formalized, driven by the organization and tied to its strategic plan.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

The LAFD will lose a large percentage of its workforce to retirements in the next five to seven years. The departing employees will take with them valuable experience and knowledge. One of the ways that the private, military, and government sector have addressed this type of issue has been through succession planning and an awareness of generational differences. This leads to the following set of research questions:

1. How can the LAFD employ succession planning to ensure that there will be a seamless transfer of knowledge to the next generation of employees?
 - a. What are the current succession plans and practices in the LAFD?
 - b. What impact do generational differences in the LAFD personnel have on succession planning?
 - c. What do private, military, civil service and government-sector succession planning look like, and how can the LAFD incorporate successful techniques of these organizations?
 - d. Given the current plans and practices, private sector approaches, and generational differences, how can current LAFD succession planning be adapted to address the impact of retirements and enable the necessary transfer of knowledge?

C. ARGUMENT: MAIN CLAIMS, WARRANTS, EVIDENCE AND CHALLENGES

As the workforce demographics of the LAFD shift, the overall, department-wide level of experience and practical wisdom will diminish. Experience and practical wisdom are necessary when dealing with the complexities of manmade or natural catastrophes. The ability to draw on experiences, recognize patterns, and apply solutions is part of the decision-making model when dealing with these complex issues. Without comprehensive succession planning, this institutional memory is likely to be lost, and likely to impact operational capabilities.

Fire departments respond to “everything from forest fires to toxic chemical spills to medical emergencies,” stated former Department of Homeland (DHS) Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. His assessment of the fire service reveals that fire

departments are a vital component to our nation's homeland security and that responding to "everything" requires a new mindset. Homeland Security is a new meta-discipline within the fire service; the events of September 11, 2001, established a new era and an expanded role of the fire service in homeland security.

The public expectation and demands for emergency services in the 21st century will drive fire departments throughout the country to develop and sustain their workforce. In order to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the department and its workforce, the LAFD needs to develop a succession plan that will retain and preserve the quality and state of the institutional experience, but also expand the new skill sets that will be necessary in the future.

The loss of experience, practical wisdom, and institutional memory will threaten homeland security because they shore up weaknesses and exploitable gaps in our current and future workforce. This can be minimized by the development and application of a comprehensive succession plan. By analyzing successful models of succession planning in private, government and military sector, the research may help identify guidelines for succession planning at the LAFD.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The research will provide guidelines for succession planning that can be adopted by fire service professionals and other government agencies. The case studies will document the significant accomplishments of succession planning in private, government, and military sectors. Homeland security practitioners and leaders will gain an understanding on how to apply succession planning in their organizations and prepare the workforce for the challenges of the 21st century.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on succession planning dates back to the early 1900s, but mostly applies to succession planning in the private sector. The literature on succession planning comes from four major sources: 1) Documents written by federal, state and local government committees to be used as guidelines for succession planning; 2) Applied research papers written by fire service professionals addressing succession planning; 3) Business journals and reviews written by business professionals and academics regarding the purpose and progress of succession planning, and 4) Best practices written by practitioners who have developed and implemented succession plans in their organizations.

The literature review will address the following: 1) History of succession planning, 2) Objectives of succession planning, 3) Generational differences in the workforce, 4) Leadership, 5) First line officers, 6) Knowledge transfer, 7) Best practices for succession planning,

A. HISTORY OF SUCCESSION PLANNING

In the early twentieth century, the French industrialist and writer Henri Fayol argued that management consists of a set of activities that are common to all organizations. In 1916, he published his experience in the book *Administration Industrielle et Générale*, where he developed his *fourteen principles of administration*. Fayol claimed that management has the responsibility to ensure the long-term stability of tenured personnel and that if that stability were ignored, then key positions in an organization would be filled with ill-prepared workers. That claim is as true today as it was in 1916: The strength of an organization lies within its people, and when people become more skilled and prepared, the organization benefits (Fayol, 1918).

Succession planning is not a new concept; it was the subject of a study by Chester Barnard, a business executive and pioneer in management practices. Barnard looked at organizations as systems of cooperation of human activity and noted that they are

typically short-lived. It is rare for a firm to last more than a century, and the only organization that can claim a substantial age is the Roman Catholic Church. According to Barnard, organizations are not long-lived because they do not meet the two criteria necessary for survival: Effectiveness, which is social in character, and efficiency, which depends on individual satisfaction with work (Barnard, 1968). If what Barnard says is true, the incentives for employees complying with objectives should be greater than incentives for noncompliance. Furthermore, consequences of noncompliance should be more unpleasant than any inconvenience in compliance.

In 1927, Barnard was president of New Jersey Bell Telephone Company. He contemplated the impact of replacing his entire management team overnight with executives from other companies within the Bell system. He forecast chaos within twelve hours, despite the similarities in company operations, knowledge, skills, and parallel job duties. Barnard was emphasizing the importance of established interpersonal relationships even in a supposedly impersonal organization. As a guideline, he noted, succession planning should contain goals related to fostering interpersonal relationships.

As Barnard points out, it is rare for a firm to last more than a century. The LAFD has been in existence for over 120 years, and as it grows and develops in the 21st century, it is critical that key positions in the organization be filled with skilled and prepared workers.

B. BROAD OBJECTIVES OF SUCCESSION PLANNING

Any succession plan will have the following functional objectives: (1) identify and select best-fit candidates for leadership positions; (2) assure effective leadership development; (3) preserve organizational knowledge and intellectual capital, and (4) maximize retention and minimize turnover of top-performing employees.

A particularly effective succession plan will also contain ways of preventing and/or overcoming obstacles to meeting functional objectives (hereafter, preventive objectives). These methods may include: (a) providing incentives for achieving preventive objectives; (b) fostering interpersonal relationships between employees, especially between mentors and mentees; (c) establishing an electronic record of

employees' skills, work history, and other job-related information; (d) assuring that succession-related activities do not interfere with first responder or other defining activities of LAFD; and (e) regularly updating strategies and techniques for meeting objectives. Serving these objectives has been shown to benefit organizational performance and worker morale (Rothwell, 2001).

1. Benefits of Succession Planning

According to Rothwell, there are four fundamental reasons for succession planning. First, succession planning is the method that an organization must employ to ensure “the right people in the right places at the right times.” Second, succession planning lessens the effect of downsizing. Third, succession planning advances diversity and multiculturalism. Fourth, succession planning provides a framework for the establishment of career paths, training, developmental plans, and individual career moves (Rothwell, 2001).

According to Barnett & Davis in a study of 731 manufacturing organizations in Europe and the United States, well-managed firms perform significantly better than poorly managed firms with higher levels of public duty, profit, and sales growth. Organizations recognize that the role of leadership can directly improve business and financial results. In a study of 56 U.S. companies, those with succession plans in place had a 22% higher return to shareholders than the industry average (Garman, 2008). Although direct evidence of return of investment is scarce, a well-executed succession plan helps optimize performance of organizations. The remainder of this review is dedicated to discussing plan objectives, and identifying general guidelines for meeting those objectives.

2. Identification and Development

Succession planning helps identify best-fit candidates for key roles. However, difficulties in fostering mentor-mentee (i.e., a specific kind of interpersonal) relationships have thwarted efforts to identify these candidates. In a recent study, 40% of the 200 professionals polled reported that their companies were unsuccessful in encouraging

collaboration between younger and older workers (Barnett & Davis, 2008). This lack of collaboration potentially undermines a younger employee's chances at quality leadership development. To better understand the knowledge skills and abilities that an organization possesses, an organization needs to survey their workforce and identify those employees that have the necessary skills for future key roles. Succession planning is not meant to discriminate against those employees that are lacking certain skills, but an opportunity to develop the entire workforce.

By developing a database, an organization can quickly identify its current talent pool and forecast its future talent needs. Employee development plans should be based on this type of skills gap analysis. The skill sets that are in use today may not be effective in the future. Development plans should include integrating leadership, mentoring, education, and diversity (Green, 2000). By developing a core set of competencies, leaders can close this gap and set clear measurable objectives.

So how does an organization know what skills will be necessary in the future? One method is to develop a future-oriented job analysis. Job analysis is one of the most useful tools for gathering information and developing valid and defensible content (Landis, Fogli, & Goldberg, 1998). A fundamental assumption of traditional job analysis is that the job as it exists today will be similar in the future. To overcome this fundamental assumption, Landis et al. developed a future-oriented job analysis procedure. This model draws on the skills of subject-matter experts who review existing job competencies, develop questionnaires, and establish a blueprint for future job skills. Advancements in firefighting and the complexities in the operating environment make it necessary that the LAFD reevaluate the skills necessary for the challenges of tomorrow.

3. Current Implementation of Succession Plans at the LAFD

Succession planning in the LAFD has been an informal process, sometimes referred to as "grooming." With this process, the focus is on replacement of personnel versus the development of personnel. Replacement planning is often confused with succession planning. Replacement planning in its simplest terms is a form of risk

management (Rothwell, 2001). The goal is to limit the impact stemming from the immediate or unplanned loss of a key incumbent position. Replacement planning focuses on filling a gap, but is not necessarily future oriented.

Formal succession-planning processes have clear objectives and adhere to a standard that all employees can understand. In contrast, the informal process relies on supervisors and subordinates to develop their own plans. This informal process can sometimes develop subordinates as mirror images of their supervisors. Some examples of informal succession planning are when individual supervisors use their initiative to mentor their subordinates with the goal of promoting them through the ranks. Inasmuch as the informal processes may have benefits, they lack consistency and often are not tied to a strategic plan.

One example on how the LAFD fills vacancies is through the promotional process. The department will anticipate vacancies, administer promotional exams, identify employees through interviews, and promote them into existing vacancies. The LAFD incorporates this informal type of succession planning at the various levels of the organization, but does not have a single department-wide plan. This type of system breeds competition, similar to a horse race, and places candidates against each other with a formalized test and evaluation system, which results in winners and losers. A system that grooms talent from entry, including formalized mentoring, development programs, and education, is considered a relay (Murphy, 2006). The goal is to shift from a culture that promotes horse races to one that promotes relays.

The LAFD is a government organization with civil service guidelines. It uses a hybrid of replacement and succession planning to address the vacant positions in the department. The department provides leadership training in certain ranks, anticipates vacancies, and offers recurring promotional exams to fill these vacancies. This model has served the department well over the past several years, but the increase in retirements has caused a greater demand on our current system. In terms of longevity, a career in the fire department is different from a career in the private sector. Unlike the private sector, where an employee is hired and may stay for only a few years, a career firefighter will

likely stay with the department for more than thirty years. So, it is easy to see that when a career firefighter leaves the organization, so does thirty years of institutional memory.

There are two trends in the distribution of employee characteristics at the LAFD, each of which presents a challenge to accomplishing LAFD's succession needs. First, mass retirement of baby-boom employees has made LAFD personnel younger and less experienced. Second, LAFD employees are becoming more culturally and generationally diverse (Barnett & Davis, 2008).

C. GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

There has been a drastic shift in the age distribution of the U.S. population over the past few decades. The median age of the population is projected to be 41 in 2040, whereas it was 36 in 2000 (see Figure 1).

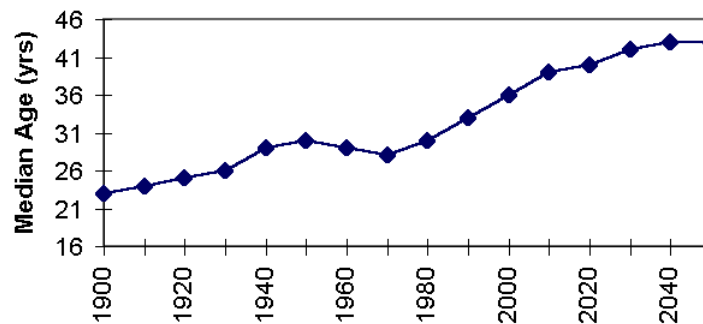


Figure 1. Median Age of the U.S. Population, 1900–2050 (From Urban Institute, 1997)

Moreover, the proportion of the older age group (55+ years old) will continue to grow at a greater rate, compared with their younger counterparts (see Figure 2).

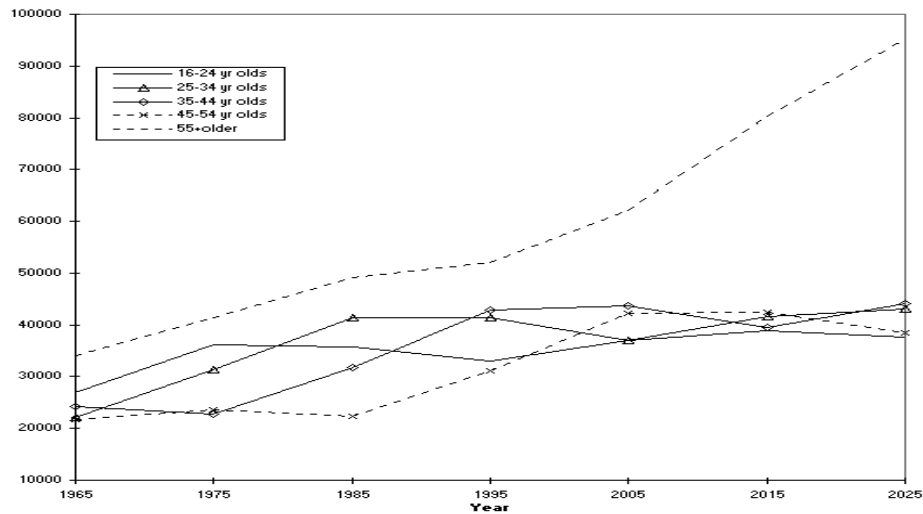


Figure 2. U.S. Population Trend, by Age, 1965–2025 (From Urban Institute, 1997)

The age distribution of the U.S. labor force also reflects this demographic shift, in which the median age of the U.S. labor force has been steadily increasing since 1980s (see Figure 3).

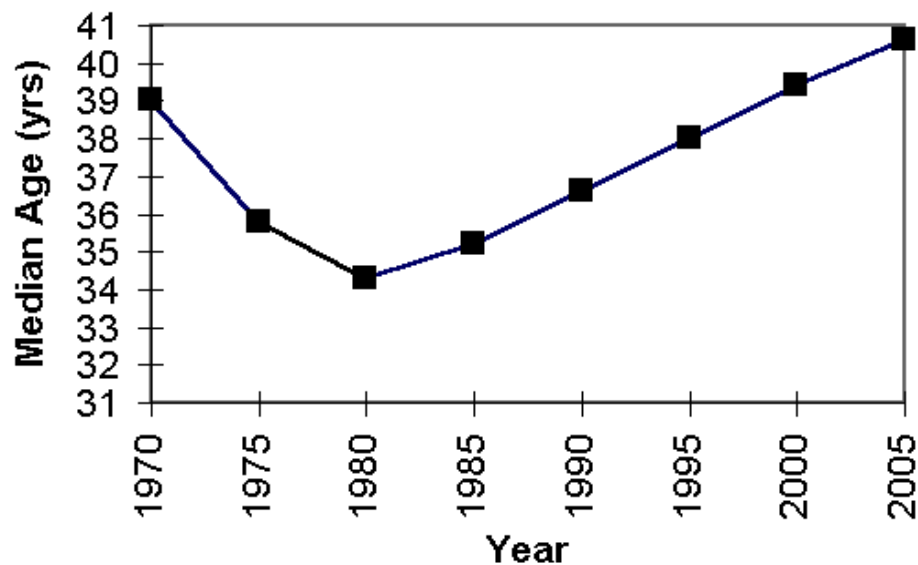


Figure 3. Median Age of the U.S. Labor Force, 1965–2005 (From Urban Institute, 1997)

The median age of the U.S. labor force in 2005 was 41 years. Such demographic trends in the United States clearly point to the need for developing and retaining talent. Many government jurisdictions are facing the potential loss of 40 to 50% of their workforces in the next few years. At the same time, there are too few people at younger ages to replace the baby boomers (Kiyonaga, 2004). Potential vacancies are a result of the baby boom generation reaching retirement age. According to DeLong (2004), workers 45 or older were expected to increase from 33% to 40% of the workforce between 1998 and 2008. During the same time, workers aged 25 to 44 would fall from 51% to 44% of the labor force. This decline of 3 million workers from the pool was expected to augment the 17 million projected to reach retirement age.

Baby boomers account for approximately 55% of the workforce in California (California Department of Personnel Administration & State Personnel Board, 2009) and, according to *Forbes* magazine, a baby boomer will reach the age of 60 every seven seconds for the next 17 years. As baby boomers reach retirement age, can public institutions continue to operate effectively under this drain of experience and expertise?

This change in demographics will lead to a loss of experience and judgment, and will have an operational impact on the department, because firefighting and emergency management skills are not learned overnight. They are part of a learning process that evolved over decades and needs to be passed on to the next generation. A comprehensive succession plan can reduce the gaps in experience and judgment. While the research shows that this workforce shortage is going to affect the future of our organizations, organizations that have an effective succession plan in place will be able to successfully fill their key leadership positions.

1. Managing a Multi-Generational Workforce

Regarding generational differences, today's American workforce is unique and diverse in so many ways. Workplace diversity adds depth, breadth, and scope to organizations. It also has the potential to adversely affect individual and group performance, creating obstacles that may impede attaining organizational goals. The mix of race, gender, ethnicity, age, and generations in today's workplace requires

organizations to understand that a “one size fits all” style of management is no longer effective. Younger workers have different values and attitudes toward their jobs and their employers than did their predecessors. Understanding generational differences may enable management to structure strategies and transformation techniques, motivating employees to attain the full extent of their skills.

At least four generations exist in today’s workforce (see Figure 4). Those generations are: 1) Traditionalists, 2) Baby Boomers, 3) Generation Xers, and 4) Millennials (Lancaster & Stillman, 2003). Grouping and classifying people into specific generations and then naming the generations is useful because generations develop certain, and sometimes significant, attitudes and actions that impact the country’s economics, politics, society and culture.

	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation Xers	Millennials (Gen Y, GeNext)
Birth Years	Pre-1946	1946-1964	1965-1981	1982-2000
Population Size	75 Million (25% of whom are still in the workforce)	80 Million	46 Million	76 Million
Influencers	The Great Depression; World War II; the GI Bill; the Cold War	Booming birthrate; economic prosperity; Vietnam; Watergate; protest and human rights movements; sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll; suburbia; dual incomes	Sesame Street and MTV; personal computers; children of divorce; AIDS; crack cocaine; loss of “world” safety	Expansion of technology and the media; drugs and gangs; pervasive violence; widening chasm between haves and have-nots; unprecedented immigration growth
View of institutions	Loyal to institution	Want to put their stamp on institutions	Are skeptical of institutions	Judge institutions on their own merit
#1 reason for staying on the job, or for changing jobs	Loyalty to clients and customers	Making a difference	Building a career	Work that has meaning

	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation Xers	Millennials (Gen Y, GeNext)
Traits	Patriotic; loyal; heads down, onward and upward attitude; polite; fiscally conservative; faith in institutions; high work ethic; graciousness; experience; keepers of institutional memory; may feel overlooked and unappreciated ("I've acquired wisdom over the years but there doesn't seem to be much demand for it.")	Idealistic and optimistic; highly competitive; overwhelming need to succeed; question authority; the "sandwich generation" with elder-care concerns; responding to healthcare issues, divorce, death of parent, kids in college; may be turning inward; have difficulty admitting something is wrong; don't like to ask for help; at risk for burnout; experienced; team-workers; skilled at mentoring	Eclectic; resourceful; comfortable with change; self-reliant; adaptable; skeptical about relationships and distrust institutions; high divorce rate; info-highway pioneers; entrepreneurial and independent; innovative; full of energy; fun at work; the generation that "got rid of the box"	Aka "The Digital Generation"; globally concerned; integrated; cyber literate; media and technology savvy; expect 24-hour info; realistic; probably have too much stuff to sort through; acknowledge diversity and expect others to do so; environmentally conscious; will try anything
Negative Stereotypes	Can't learn technology; refuse to give up the reins; non-engaged	Materialistic; work hard not smart; sold out their ideals; heavily in debt; not loyal	Haven't paid their dues; too young for management; say what they think; slackers; aggressive; annoying; loud	Unaware of lack of skills; require excessive affirmation; MTV generation
Values	Job stability; long-term careers; great reputation; fiscal responsibility; take care of possessions and responsibilities	Who am I? Where did my passion go? Is it too late to get it back? Seek organizations with integrity; politically correct; eager to put their own stamp on things; good pay; community involvement	Be my own boss; team environment contrasted with entrepreneurial spirit; advancement opportunity	High value on education; high value on life style balance; work is not the most important thing; stepping stone for future opportunities; high tech, innovative; diverse workforce; Be my own boss
Recruitment, engagement, management, and retention	Recognize their loyalty and experience; select activities that help them show what they know; remember that traditionalists have career paths, too; focus on evolution, not revolution	Be aware of Boomers' competitive nature; acknowledge their contributions; focus on how they can make an impact; offer continued training opportunities, especially life skills and balance	Respect their skepticism; establish your credentials; show you have a sense of humor; let them know you like them; talk about how training applies to their careers, not just their jobs	Don't assume they are all at the same level in training; expect to do more remedial training; teach in shorter modules, testing often and making it fun; help them visualize how the training applies to their jobs; understand they learn best by collaborating

	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation Xers	Millennials (Gen Y, GeNext)
The workplace as an institution	40% say their companies don't do a good job at making them want to stay; 70% think a one-company career is good; 48% said training opportunities play a role in staying; 73% plan to return to work in some capacity after they retire	43% say they lack mentoring opportunities and 30% say that contributes to job dissatisfaction; 75% say time off would be the greatest reward; 35% think a one-company career is good; prone to workplace burnout	30% have left a job due to lack of training opportunities; 80% of Gen Xer men put time with family above challenging work or a higher salary; only 17% think a one-company career is good	Globally aware, cyber literate, techno-savvy; personal safety is #1 workplace issue; they expect diversity
Improving feedback and communication	"No news is good news." May not be sending enough info down the ladder, nor receptive to info coming up the ladder; provide training in feedback skills (50% haven't received feedback training); assume they <u>can</u> change behaviors	"Once a year, formal and documented." Initiate weekly informal talks and formally document them;	"So how am I doing?" Give feedback all the time and to the point: be available; allow freedom to keep them learning and focused on career paths; immediate and regular feedback; tell it like it is (Xers have a well-tuned BS-ometer)	"I want it with the push of a button. Let's all talk about it." Initiate the connection; consider electronic connections and newsletter; make it visual; allow them an active role in creating their own education and work plans
Performance rewards	Seek high-performing traditionalists and mix them with high-potential Xers to transfer the learning; consider alternative scheduling or job sharing; recruit them actively; make them feel part of the culture; help them ease into retirement; recognize the satisfaction of a job well done	Money, title, recognition; recognize them as the first "sandwiched" generation caring for children as well as parents; provide time off with pay; provide life skills and balance training; provide second-career avenues	Xers have shaken up the rewards system; skeptical about jobs and organizations; prefer time with family and outside interests; provide opportunities for development of personal and professional life	Provide work that has meaning

Figure 4. Generational Differences (From Lancaster, 2004)

Generational differences can have an impact on succession planning. When managing an organization with a multiple generations, it is necessary to view the organization through the eyes of its workforce. D. Michael Abrashoff (ret) captain of the destroyer USS Benfold, stated,

the key to being a successful skipper was to see the ship through the eyes of the sailors. As we continue to invest in the latest technology, equipment and systems we realize that these are only used to facilitate the mission. Our military has spent a lot of time and money preparing for tomorrow's battles with antiquated methods. The people that operate the equipment are the ones that give us our fighting edge. (Abrashoff, 2002, p.1)

The challenge to managing multiple generations is that they each have unique work ethics, different perspectives on work, plus distinct and preferred ways of managing and being managed. Managing this diversity of ages, faces, values, and views in an increasingly difficult line of work is at the heart of succession planning. The LAFD should recognize the innovation and new ideas of our young generation, and incorporate them into the department.

III. THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN SUCCESSION PLANNING

In January of 2006, the Los Angeles city controller's office conducted an internal audit of the LAFD. Areas of concern included generational differences in LAFD, and lack of leadership training. The audit stated,

Undertake a comprehensive effort to develop future leaders and increase management competency to lead, guide and mentor both male and female firefighters, as well as those from all ethnic groups. Also, future leaders should be trained to address the different communication style and direction needed to assure today's generation of recruits can excel in a paramilitary organization like the LAFD. (Chick, 2005)

The department responded to the controller's audit and implemented many recommendations, including leadership and human relations training.

Leadership plays an important role in succession planning. One issue is that emerging leaders are being asked to take the reins from incumbents they are trusting less and less. Consequently, many are saying. "No, thanks" to the opportunity, and this is baffling the current generation of leaders (Carucci, 2006). Many companies have concluded that within the organization, future potential leaders are rare. However, they are wrong to be cynical. The literature shows that there is no shortage of leaders within these organizations. They are looking forward to leading, with one qualification; they have no desire whatsoever to lead as they have been led. Most incumbent leaders are not able to recognize these emerging leaders and their potential.

Leadership is not something that one does *to* someone else. Rather, it is something one does *with* someone else. True leadership is not a solo act; it is relationship of reliance on others. In the Los Angeles Fire Department, leadership is commonly associated with rank. A problem with this type of system is the perpetual "myth of objectivity" (Carucci, 2006). This traditional management wisdom of rank based leadership has taught leaders to maintain their objectivity by keeping their distance. The problem with distance is that not only will it not increase objectivity, it will not help human relations either. Leaders need others leading with them, not under them.

Fulop and Linstead (1999) point out that leadership was the single most important factor in motivating employees and improving productivity. Early studies focused on finding ‘one best way’ of leadership appropriate for shop floor or supervisory conditions, with the aim of developing training programs to assist managers in becoming effective leaders. Since then, leadership has become a fundamental component of many theories of organization and management. Despite the increasing complexity of contemporary leadership, Baruch (1998) reports that her examination of 113 leadership papers revealed that in most cases studies concerned ‘appointments’ rather than leadership. As Baruch (1998) points out, there is a significant difference between the two. Appointments concerns the granting of power (through an external authority) over other people, whereas leadership is concerned with inner processes, where people recognize and are ready and willing to be influenced by another person. While the distinction is not novel, Baruch (1998) argues that it is misleading to treat one as if it is the other. The LAFD recognized that leadership is an important factor in motivating employees and improving productivity. In 2009, the department developed the LAFD Leadership Academy, a 136-hour graduate level course that provides primary leaders the knowledge, tools, and practical skills necessary to lead in a complex organization. Graduates of this class have lauded the department for taking a progressive step in leadership training.

One of the most common leadership mistakes is treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems. Technical problems can be solved by an authority or expert. They have a known solution. Adaptive challenges require leadership. These problems are not solvable through expertise or standard operating procedures. They take more than just hiring the right expert and pointing him or her at the problem. Leading effectively requires recognizing both the adaptive and technical aspects of a situation, and tailoring efforts accordingly (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

In a complex organization like the LAFD, the importance of developing leaders who can handle adaptive problems is essential. Organizational hierarchy, long serving policies and deep-seated culture tend to create like-minded people that do not adapt well to change. In a bureaucratic structure, succession planning perpetuates old methods of

thinking, as there are few rewards or incentives for leaders who think outside of the box. LAFD Fire Chief Millage Peaks' philosophy emphasizes the need to develop a succession planning model that provides department wide opportunities for all employees, both sworn and civilian. His fresh approach to succession planning is aimed at strategically developing people to meet the projected needs of the organization, and incorporate specialized testing and evaluation procedures based upon job requirements.

Chief Peaks further states that talent within the organization should be a shared resource. Moving leaders to different jobs can help an organization revitalize itself, and also gives employees an opportunity to add breadth to their experience. New or expanded job responsibilities, assignments, and other challenging experiences do the most to prepare individuals for future leadership roles.

A. THE ROLE OF THE FIRST LINE COMPANY OFFICER

In the LAFD, the fulcrum position is that of the first-line company officer (Fire Captain). Smoke (2001) writes,

More than any other position, company officers can turn the fire department's mission statement into a reality. Through leadership and example, company officers can train their crews to reflect the department's goals and standards.

According to the consulting firm Mission Centered Solutions, first-line leaders are the primary keepers and trainers of an organization's culture. They influence the workforce more than any chief can hope to. They are the organization—its present and its future. Fire captains bring order to chaos, improve our people's lives, and strengthen our organizations. Leading enables us to leave a legacy for the leaders of the future so that they can take our places, well prepared for the road ahead (MCS, 2007).

The LAFD has over 600 captains. Because of their structured position in the department, these primary leaders have tremendous influence on the culture and norms of the organization. Historically, organizational culture shaped these leaders. The goal now

is to have these leaders shape the culture and attain the goals of the organization while meeting the needs of their subordinates. Succession planning and officer development should be targeted at the rank of Fire Captain.

A research paper by FDNY Deputy Assistant Chief Abdo Nahmod (Nahmod, 2010) studied the organizational impact of the first line officer in the FDNY. His research also found that organizational culture and leadership is primarily influenced by lieutenants and captains in the fire department.

Further literature supports these findings, and shows the value of these primary leaders. An example is a eulogy that Captain James Gormley FDNY gave for Capt. Francis J. Callahan, a 30-year veteran of the department who was killed in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Captain Gormley eloquently stated, “We both believed captain to be the most important rank in the department.”

Captains and lieutenants of the New York City Fire Department share a special relationship with other officers of similar rank; they are the front line leadership within their organization, and shape the future of the organization. Firefighters and their officers share a different but also special relationship. Officers literally lead firefighters into harm’s way. If things go badly, they are required by our oath and tradition to be the last of their command to leave. Accountability for their men and women is carved into their hearts. Responsibility for their crew, families, and children are in the depth of their souls (Ney York Times, December 21, 2001).

Leadership development is a critical activity for senior leaders. First, senior leaders must maintain a commitment to lifelong learning, and this behavior should be a model for the organization. Second, senior leaders play an important role in developing the next generation of leaders, who must be prepared for future challenges. Finally, while senior leaders are responsible for teaching others to develop their leadership capacities, leaders can also learn from their subordinates (Wallace, 2003).

You learn the job of the man above you, and you teach your job to the man below you in rank. That goes for every man in this outfit. Understood?

—1965 Lt. Col. Hal Moore, 1st Battalion 7th Cavalry Regiment, Vietnam War

Critical thinking is an important skill that needs to be developed in the fire department. Critical thinking is the process of actively and logically conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information. This information is gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

Intellectual behavior and critical thinking were studied by Dr. Benjamin Bloom (Bloom, 1965). Bloom's Taxonomy is a multi-tiered model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity. The six levels are 1) Knowledge, which involves memorization of facts, data, and information; 2) Comprehension, which involves understanding; 3) Application, which involves using the knowledge and comprehension; 4) Analysis, which requires one to take apart the different components and understand how they are interrelated; 5) Synthesis, which involves putting everything back together; and 6) Evaluation, which requires judgment in making a decision.

These high order skills should be taught to firefighters in the academy. Critical thinking and Bloom's taxonomy have been applied in academia for years. Results include applications in articles describing everything from corrosion training to medical preparation. In almost all circumstances, when an instructor desires to teach students using an organized framework, Bloom's Taxonomy can prove helpful.

Over time, LAFD firefighters will be faced with increasingly complex problems. These wicked problems¹ will require firefighters to not only rely on their training, but to use critical thinking.

¹ "Wicked Problem" is a phrase used in social planning to describe a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems.

The nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools.

—Thucydides

B. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Organizational knowledge is knowledge held, created, and shared in an organizational context; to foster creativity and innovation for competitive advantage. According to Nonaka, knowledge is defined as “justified true belief” (Nonaka, von Krogh, & Voelpel, 2006). Knowledge can also be defined as experience or previous knowledge that has been put into context, and is now actionable and therefore of value to the organization (Hatch, 2009 Jun 8). Organizational knowledge is about people-the ideas, experiences, expertise, and knowledge contained in the minds of individuals-integrated with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection. Organizational knowledge consists of the critical intellectual assets within an organization. Organizational knowledge in the LAFD is composed of (1) tacit knowledge, (2) individual knowledge, (3) explicit knowledge, (4) group knowledge, and (5) extra-organizational knowledge. The LAFD has over 120 years of organizational knowledge; this critical intellectual asset has been passed on through training, storytelling, and social interaction. Understanding how to capture this knowledge and continue to pass it on to the next generations will be a key component of the organizational succession plan.

Tacit knowledge refers to a knowledge which is only known by an individual, and that is difficult to communicate to the rest of an organization. It is not codified, is intangible, and is somewhat difficult to express and to communicate to other people. An example of tacit knowledge might be the instincts of an LAFD veteran firefighter who can gauge a fire’s behavior, and based on experience quickly determine the correct course of action to combat the fire. Individual knowledge in the LAFD is most often tacit, unless the individual possesses explicit knowledge that is unshared with any person or organization.

Explicit knowledge is knowledge that is usually codified and stored, and may be readily communicated to others. Common forms of explicit knowledge are manuals, documents, and standard operating procedures. Developing standard operating procedures converts tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. The department has an extensive text library that should be updated and sent to an electronic database, ensuring that this explicit knowledge to remains relevant, updated, and accessible.

Group knowledge is defined as individual knowledge that multiple individuals rely upon, share, and understand (Hatch, 2009 Jun 8). Group knowledge is generally contained within a community or practice, and is generally not shared externally unless there is a common or related function. Group knowledge can be disseminated through socialization and networks, which often results in the transformation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Through the exchange of ideas, groups synthesize individual knowledge into group knowledge. Some examples of group knowledge on the LAFD are specialized resources such as Hazard Materials, Urban Search and Rescue, and Airborne Task Forces. This group knowledge is limited to certain fire stations and sections of the department, and is not widely shared.

Extra-organizational knowledge extends beyond organizational boundaries. It generated from exchanges between similar organizations. An example is the sharing of ideas and smart practices between two or more municipal fire departments.

Organizational knowledge can be transformed into an asset when it is harnessed and brought into some sort of order. One way of harnessing organizational knowledge is to develop a repository² where information can be stored and exchanged. By developing a repository, employees can quickly access information, and apply it to their daily operations. According to Cognitive Technologies, a typical employee spends approximately thirty minutes per day searching for information. This can cost an organization \$40-\$50 per day per employee. It is estimated that poor knowledge harnessing cost U.S. businesses over \$1.4 trillion dollars.

² A knowledge repository is a computerized system that systematically captures, organizes and categorizes an organization's knowledge. The repository can be searched and data can be quickly retrieved.

Knowledge can be harnessed in several ways, including these two examples: The first, developing repositories and archives, can act as a force multiplier on organizational knowledge. Through this system, an employee can access information and share information and, at the same time, increase the organization's knowledge.

We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information on it.

—Samuel Johnson (1709–1784).

The second, institutional memory (IM), consists of the essential steps in learning from experiences, documentation of decisions, evaluation of results, and organizational response to change. IM depends upon the preservation of data, and also the analytical skills necessary for its effective use within the organization. Even when decisions are documented and evaluated, the fire service has few mechanisms of institutional memory to retain the lessons learned. Agencies should develop a systematic plan for learning, which includes listing of identified uncertainties, methods for resolving the uncertainty, evaluation existing actions, and mechanisms for retaining and storing lessons in institutional memory (Tuomi, 1995).

The LAFD has developed a web portal (web site), which presents information from diverse sources within the department in a unified way. This portal is widely used to disseminate operational information, but it has tremendous potential to serve as an IM archive database.

C. BEST PRACTICES IN SUCCESSION PLANNING—PRIVATE, CIVIL SERVICE, GOVERNMENT, AND MILITARY SECTOR

1. Private Sector

All businesses are better off when transitions in their top ranks go smoothly. Succession planning has become an important practice at companies around the world. For some companies, succession planning is a strategic process that minimizes leadership gaps for critical positions, and provides opportunities for top talent to develop the skills necessary for future roles. In the current economic downturn, the need to identify and

develop top talent for critical roles has never been more important. Many organizations faced with executive retirement will simply recruit experienced leaders from other companies. Attracting talent from the competition, however, is no longer a viable option. Not only is it costly, but studies conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership³ have revealed that 66% of senior managers hired from the outside usually failed within the first 18 months. The smart way for association professionals to combat the looming leadership—succession crisis is to identify and develop the internal talent needed for key executive positions—and to start now, concludes a 1999 article in *Workforce* magazine (Workforce, 1999 p.34).

Succession planning in the private sector should be designed to meet the needs of the organization, particularly what it needs to implement its strategy effectively. The process should be systematic, repeatable, and intelligently positioned in the organization's strategic plan. Finally, a succession planning system should be designed to be simple, flexible and amenable to continuous improvement (Barnett & Davis, 2008).

Measurements of effectiveness are critical components for evaluating and demonstrating the value of the succession planning process. By developing metrics, quantitative and qualitative data such as return on investment, employee turnover, and company performance can be used to measure the effectiveness of a company's succession plan.

2. Civil Services

Succession planning is an emerging process in the civilian public sector. For many years, the goals and guidelines of the public sector and civil service process were thought to be in conflict with succession planning. Succession planning in the civil service system primarily focused on the immediate need of the work unit, the filling of one position based on vacancies, with little effort in preparing or providing training and

³ The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) is a not-for-profit organization that provides coaching in management training to public, private, nonprofit, government, and education sectors worldwide.

development. The success rate of such planning efforts remains relatively low, because the focus was on the short term rather than the long term of preparing people for the new assignment.

Civil service exams are slow to change and normally test a candidate's ability on skills that were required for the last decade, but rarely test individuals for skills, knowledge, and abilities required for that position in the future. Civil service exams provide several benefits to succession planning if used strategically. Unlike the private sector, that rarely employ exams for promotions, the public sector can develop tests and promotional processes designed to address the skill sets required to fill a position. While some may consider the civil service exam process a barrier to employee development others argue that civil service exams will play a major role in future workforce development. Succession planning in the public sector is often confused with replacement planning, which are techniques that focus on near-term needs specific to a position, which may or may not be critical to the organization's health (Green, 2000).

The impact of the global economy and the rate of change in the workplace have forced public agencies to look at more effective and efficient ways of filling vacancies. No longer can public agencies afford to fill positions with reactive measures or short-term approaches. These measures will only continue to dig a deeper hole for those agencies that are using such antiquated systems.

The New York State Department of Civil Service (NYSDCS), a state leader in succession planning, incorporates a workforce and succession planning through an on-line resource center. Workforce planning is a fundamental planning tool, critical to quality performance that will contribute to the achievement of program objectives by providing a basis for justifying budget allocation and workload staffing levels. Workforce planning quantifies an organization's staffing needs. By leveraging technology and electronic tools, NYSDCS is adopting smart practices from other succession planning models (Kiyonaga, 2004).

Another civil service model that has gained national attention is the one adopted by the city of Plano, Texas. Plano developed a comprehensive succession plan for its

mid-sized municipality. This case study is an example of how a mid-sized city can build an effective and functioning talent pipeline. The specific findings of this plan include recommendations that other public organizations can adopt to develop their own planning effort (Ross, 2008). The city of Plano developed a vision to ensure it would always have capable, qualified employees to consistently provide the level of service to which its citizens were accustomed. With this vision in mind, Plano developed the Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP3). MP3 is a three phase, multidimensional program that improves managers' cognitive and leadership skills while preparing them to perform successfully in the next level positions. The goal is to prepare the right people to be in the right places at the right times.

Other national organizations, such as the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), recommend that public organizations integrate succession planning into their strategic plans, making it as much a part of the human resources process as recruitment and evaluation (Jurrell & Pewitt, 2007). The Government Accountability Office (GAO), considered a leader in the federal government for human capital, has successfully leveraged federal law to assist in succession planning. The GAO links succession planning to its overall strategic vision.

The National Fire Academy (NFA) resource center has several applied research papers that address succession planning in the fire service. One such model written by Kraig Stovall of the Englewood Department of Safety Services, specifically addresses succession planning for the Division Chief of Operations. Stovall's research found that most Departments did not employ a formal succession process designed to identify and develop future successors for their leadership roles.

3. Government

Succession planning is widely used in the private sector but is not as common in the public sector. The literature review shows that succession planning is rarely undertaken by public agencies, for a myriad of political reasons. Elected or appointed government officials and their leadership may have tenure limitations given political ties to a particular administration. They are reluctant to take on additional tasks and assume

that the succession issues are beyond their scope of work. The goals and guidelines of the civil service system sometimes impede public sector aspirations of workforce planning (Jurrell & Pewitt, 2007).

It was not until recently that government organizations began to adopt formal succession planning as a central component of their organizational plan. The Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 requires the head of each government agency to establish, in consultation with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), a comprehensive management succession program to provide training for employees and develop future managers for their agency. As the federal government confronts an array of challenges in the 21st century, it must employ strategic human capital management, including succession planning, to help meet those challenges. Leading organizations go beyond a succession planning approach that focuses on replacing individuals and engage in broad, integrated succession planning and management efforts that focus on strengthening current and future organizational capacity. Today's public organizations must develop a strategy to ensure the future leadership capabilities of the agency address the challenges of the future. (GAO, 2005)

4. Military

Succession planning has been an institutional process in the United States Army for over 230 years. Developing leaders is an everyday devotion and over time, the Army's efforts have produced tough, determined, and principled leaders. The Army's future and indeed the future of our nation depend on it (Goldsmith & Hesselbein, 2006).

According to General Shinseki United States Army, Chief of Staff 1999–2003,

The US Army knows who its leaders will be decades from today; they just don't know their names yet. They're currently on the job, wearing uniforms of sergeants, lieutenants, captains, majors, and colonels. (p. 121)

In the United States Army, there is no more important responsibility than growing leaders for the next crisis. The success of today's missions was insured years ago as the U.S. Army is committed to developing today's leaders for today's missions long before the current crisis has arrived. The Army has continued investing in the continuous

sequential and mandatory education of its leaders at every level so that when the next crisis arrives it has a competent organization ready to meet the challenge and dominate it (Goldsmith & Hesselbein, 2006).

Succession planning in the Army is not that different from most business organizations. It seeks to attract the best and brightest young people, but makes do with some entirely average men and women, which they develop into competent, confident, and selfless leaders. One notable difference between succession planning in the Army and in the business world is that the Army always prepares for a certainty of crisis. Businesses on the other hand tend to focus on the day-to-day operations, which if implemented correctly may avoid a potential crisis. Succession planning in the private sector should focus on *what if* scenarios and assessments to develop strategies when faced with uncertainty and ambiguity. Those that are armed with the best plans can overcome these instances. “In the kingdom of the blind, the one eyed man is king” means one does not have to see well to have an advantage (e.g., be king). You just need to see better than all others, advantage being relative and not absolute. The army always prepares its soldiers for the *certainty of uncertainty*. Life in the army is steeped in uncertainty, yet its mission for its leaders is to make sound decisions consistently and implement them aggressively. A leader must accept uncertainty as a given, balance risk and opportunity and find ways to generate momentum. Developing competent, prudent leaders who can adapt the uncertainties in high stress and high-risk environments is an institutional priority in the United States Army.

There is also the certainty of change; one lesson of the 20th century is that the assumptions of one decade are rarely carried over into the next. If you are the biggest and the best at what you do, then change—especially fundamental and comprehensive change—is nearly beyond reach. Even the 21st century, with all of its promising technologies, will not diverge from Darwin’s theory of evolution. Change is about people, not institutions. Those who intend to lead change will have to be visionary, agile, and bold enough to take an organization and lead it through change. According to General Shinseki (2006), “if you don’t like change, you’re going to like irrelevance even less.” (p. 126) The army, like any business, must constantly adapt to changing operational

environments. Organizations gain competence by developing leaders who have the skills, knowledge, and attributes to make good decisions in the face of uncertainty.

The United States Army defines the three components of leadership in the simplest of terms: “Be, Know, Do.” Leadership starts at the top, with the character of the leader. In order to lead others, you must make sure that you are setting the right example. The first line of the creed of the noncommissioned officer states, “no one is more professional than I.” It takes a remarkable person to move from memorizing a creed to actually living the creed. Army leadership begins with what the leader must *be*. The second word, *know*, demands professional competence. The leader must be technically competent and confident in his or her ability to get the job done. The final word, *do*, underlies everything a leader does. Leaders act as they *do*, bringing together everything, and providing purpose, direction, and motivation. Leaders in the army and civilian organizations alike work to influence people and operate to accomplish the mission, and act to improve the organization. Leaders solve problems, overcome obstacles, and strengthen teamwork and achieve objectives; they use leadership to produce results (Hesselbein, 2004; NetLibrary, 2004; Shinseki, 2004).

Although the Army has had an exemplary record of training, team building and developing its future leaders, one of its shortcomings is lack of collaboration and joint training among all the military branches. In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Goldwater–Nichols act. This reorganization of the Department of Defense was aimed at developing joint assignments among all military officers. Barry Goldwater states in his autobiography that military experiences in World War II showed him that the military services did not work well together (Goldwater & Casserly, 1988). Goldwater-Nichols found that the military services had little respect for joint service or for assignments outside individual service organizations. Their goal was to promote a culture among military officers that would lead to an appreciation and understanding of how the services could and should operate together in future conflicts. The virtues of the Goldwater-Nichols act can be applied within the fire service. By sharing resources and personnel among the various disciplines within homeland security, leaders can gain a broad perspective and improve their ability to function across all lines.

The U.S. Army has some organizational commonalities with the LAFD. Like the Army, the LAFD is steeped in tradition and operates like a paramilitary organization. Many of the same challenges, such as resistance to change, are found in both organizations and adopting a formalized succession plan can minimize these inherent risks.

D. SUMMARY

The literature review reveals that there are several models of succession planning that are used in the military, private and public sector that , when combined, can address the challenges facing the LAFD. (Stovall, 2006) The literature provides an excellent background on the different aspects of succession planning. The problem statement presented in this thesis can be further supported by the literature, but developing a succession plan for this author's agency will require further research. The next step is to develop a formal succession planning guide.

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IV. METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research will examine how the LAFD can maximize institutional memory, and transfer this knowledge to a new generation of employees. The practical significance of this project is to 1) identify the challenges of current succession planning of the LAFD; 2) identify solutions to these challenges through evaluating precedent cases; and 3) develop a conceptual and tailored succession planning guide based on identified solutions.

The method of appreciative inquiry was used, involving three case studies (1) The City of Plano Texas (2) The United States Army (3) The New York State Department of Civil Service. Subsequently, qualitative data obtained were triangulated. Triangulation uses systematic iterations between the literature review on succession planning, case evidence, and intuition. Triangulation is an approach to data analysis that synthesizes data from multiple sources.

The method of appreciative inquiry draws on the core strengths and values of an organization in order to implement its agenda for change, and to achieve its highest goals (Hammond, 1998). It focuses on what is right and working about an issue, rather than on the assumption of deficiency. The focus of this research evaluated the positive solutions to enhance succession planning, rather than finger pointing and assignment of blame. The major assumption of appreciative inquiry is that in every organization, something works effectively, and change can be managed through the identification of what works and the analysis of how to do more of what works. Appreciative inquiry is a generative change process, a process that constantly creates and re-creates.

The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, provide a diagnosis, and determine a solution. The primary focus of this traditional approach is to look at what is wrong or broken, and since we are looking for problems, we find them, but also amplify them. This approach is consistent with the American business model that sees

human systems as machines, and people as parts which are interchangeable. This predisposes us to believe that we can fix anything, and that there is a right answer or solution to organizational problems.

Appreciative inquiry was first studied in the mid-80s by Dr. David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Cooperrider suggested that by looking at what works in an organization, you can duplicate that process and continue to repeat success. The idea is to approach an organization with an appreciative eye. Although this may seem a simplistic way to face an organization's challenges, the goal is to fix an organization by doing more of what works rather than obsessing on learning from mistakes (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Through the appreciative eye, the content of the three case studies was analyzed to determine if the successes of the individual succession plans can be replicated in the LAFD.

To narrow down the data analysis, each case study will be measured against four broad objectives of succession planning and twenty-two subordinate objectives. These were selected because they are the common components of a succession plan identified through the literature review and case study.

- 1) Assessment - The process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual employee, the community, or the department as a whole.
 - a. Forecast vacancies: A systematic way of determining the future vacancy rate of the organization.
 - b. Identification of current skills: An organizational analysis measurement that shows the current skill set of the workforce.
 - c. Identification of future skills: Future oriented job analysis that identifies skill sets necessary for future challenges.
 - d. Development of core competencies: Identification of behaviors and skills that all employees are expected to demonstrate in order to carry out the goals and mission of the organization.
 - e. Employee database: An electronic archive that captures, maintains, and updates the current knowledge and abilities of each employee.

- f. Employee surveys: a form of data collection that measures employees' attitude, opinions, motivation, and satisfaction.
- 2) Development - Creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests, thus bringing the focus back onto people.
 - a. Education: Act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual, enhancing the individual's ability to use his or her mind.
 - b. Training: Learning specific skills and the practice of building these skills, often meant to replicate a behavior.
 - c. Leadership Development: A planned effort that enhances the learner's capacity to lead people.
 - d. Job shadowing: Spending a period of time with a seasoned expert, observing everything that he or she does that is related to the daily routine of the job.
 - e. 360 evaluations: a system of evaluation that receives input from subordinates, peers, and supervisors about an individual's character, competence, and other criteria.
 - f. Mentoring: A power-free, mutually beneficial relationship. Mentors are facilitators and teachers allowing partners to discover their own direction.
 - g. Task force assignments: The combination of multiple disciplines brought together to address common issues, goals, or problems.
- 3) Identification - The process through which an employee's performance can be measured against a clear set of objectives.
 - a. Work experience: Experience gained through working in a particular field or discipline.
 - b. Performance evaluations: Principal objective of the evaluation is to assist in professional development by identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
 - c. Professional Degrees/Certifications: Documents that certify that an employee met a certain standard in academic degrees, continuing education, experience, and testing.

- d. Employee Potential: Having the capacity to take on new roles or responsibilities, by providing motive and opportunity.
- 4) Selection - The process for choosing employees through examination, assessment, or outside evaluation.
- a. Examinations: Formal testing for past, current and future skill sets.
 - b. Interviews: An interactive discussion, question, and answer process for the use of evaluating a candidate.
 - c. Assessment Center: A standardized evaluation of behavior based on multiple evaluations, where the candidate assumes the role of the incumbent of the position: it used to evaluate candidates on behaviors relevant to the most critical aspects (or competencies) of the job.
 - d. Outside Evaluation: A system of evaluating a candidate by people not directly associated with the organization.
 - e. Temporary appointment/probation: a period designed for an employer to evaluate a new employee.

Triangulating the three case studies, the findings can be corroborated across data sets, reducing the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study. The convergence of the three case studies may show common themes that appear in the data gleaned from this method, and point to the same conclusion (Leedy, & Ormrod, 2001). Case studies on succession planning in the military and public sector are evaluated to determine whether the Los Angeles Fire Department can employ a succession plan to ensure a seamless transfer of knowledge to the next generation of employees.

The goals of these case studies will include an examination of the (a) strategy (b) process (c) workforce and (d) benefits of succession planning. The objectives deriving from those goals are:

1. An assessment of succession planning in the military and public sector.
2. An evaluation of the workforce generations and their impact on succession planning.
3. An evaluation of the role of leadership in succession planning.
4. An evaluation of “best practices” in succession planning.

5. The development of a conceptual planning guide model that can be applied to the first line officer of the LAFD.

B. CASE SELECTION

The case studies were selected based on organization characteristics similar to those of LAFD. Characteristics considered were structure, mission tasks and demographics.

The LAFD is a large public service municipal fire department with nearly 3,600 uniformed personnel operating from 106 fire stations who offer fire prevention, firefighting, emergency medical care, technical rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, disaster response, public education and community service to a resident population of more than four million people who live in the agency's 471 square mile territory.

LAFD has a rank structure and promotional process similar to the U.S. Army, but within the confines of the civil service protection and processes found in municipalities. The uniqueness of having a paramilitary structure and a civil service system of promotion and examinations requires the population sample to embody the following unique qualities:

- An organizational rank structure.
- An open testing system for promotions.
- Employment protection under the terms and rules of civil service.

The three case studies in this research project were selected because they have similar characteristics and employ a succession planning processes that can be applied to the LAFD.

Case Study #1 – The City of Plano, Texas, was selected because it had a work force comparable in size to the LAFD. It was experiencing the approximate percentages in retirements and it did not have a formal succession plan in place to address these emerging issues. Similar to the LAFD, it had informal succession programs that merely identified and selected people to fill specific positions without providing developmental skills to a qualified talent pool.

Case Study #2 – The United States Army was selected because it has a rank-based promotional system, with demographics comparable to the LAFD. It is largely structured around a command and control organizational hierarchy, and deals with crisis and consequence management.

Case Study #3 – The New York State Department of Civil Service was selected because of its complex organizational design, overseeing a workforce of over 140,000 state employees; like the LAFD, it operates within the confines and structures of the civil service system.

C. STATUS QUO—SUCCESSION METHOD IN THE LAFD

In January of 2007, Fire Chief Douglas Barry (now ret) established the three Operating Principles of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD): (1) Operate Through Teamwork; (2) Operate Ethically and with Integrity; (3) Operate to Position the Department for the Future. Positioning the department for the future speaks to the need of developing a comprehensive succession plan that will prepare and develop the future workforce of the organization.

Currently the LAFD uses a hybrid of replacement and succession planning to address the vacant positions on the department. Vertical and lateral movement of employees occurs throughout the department. Vertical movement is tied to the promotional process while lateral movement is designed to give employees a broad organizational perspective within their current rank by exposing them to other positions. An example of a lateral movement is through the department transfer process. An employee can request a transfer to another position in the department to gain additional skills or simply for a change of assignment. This model has several limitations because vertical and lateral movement of employees is not necessarily tied to a strategic plan, and often happens haphazardly. The increase in retirements, globalization, and a demand for employees with new skill sets will require a formalized succession plan in order to ensure the seamless transfer of knowledge to the next generation of employees.

V. ANALYSIS

A. CASE STUDY #1

The City of Plano is located in northeast Texas. It has over 2,500 employees. A 2001 review of Plano's workforce identified 46% of the Management Team as eligible to retire by 2006, and this number increases to 70% by 2010. The reality of these numbers, as well as the absence of a formalized succession plan, raised a sense of urgency within the city council and executive management (Jurrell & Pewitt, 2007).

After exhaustive research and reviewing succession planning models from the private and public sectors, the City of Plano set forth to develop a customized succession plan to address the emerging void in its workforce. The research focused on the following six research questions:

1. What are the strategic objectives of the organization now and for the future?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's culture?
3. What changes, if any, are indicated to continually improve the work environment?
4. What executive/leadership competencies will be required to help the city succeed in the future?
5. What assessment methods are beneficial to identify potential candidates and develop systematic training?
6. What tools are useful to evaluate program results?

Armed with empirical data from the research questions, the city developed the Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP₃). A multi-tiered, twelve-month program, MP₃ combines diverse training methods to maximize cognitive, affective, and social learning. The program provides reciprocal benefits for the participants and the city, in that managerial skill sets and opportunities for promotion are enhanced while the City's commitment to service excellence is reinforced. The goal is to provide the skills

required of executive managers. The three-phase, multidimensional program improves managers' cognitive and leadership skills while preparing them to perform successfully in next-level positions as they become available. The City of Plano viewed succession planning as a continuum, not as a onetime program.

The Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP₃) addresses challenges and potential performance gaps resulting from retirements/resignations of tenured managers. Additionally, it enhances skills and broadens perspectives of incumbents to meet high performance standards. At the cusp of anticipating changing needs and a desire to remain a high-performance organization, the City of Plano began reaping the rewards of succession planning (Ross, 2008). This three-phase program includes the following:

1. Application Phase
2. Assessment Phase
3. Development Phase

Application Phase. The first step is the application process. Employees can submit applications on their own, or their names may be submitted by the city manager or an executive director. To help interested employees decide whether this model is the geared for them, they are invited to attend a lunch seminar to discuss program details, and have questions answered by the program director and graduates. These informal orientations allow candidates to make their own assessment of the program. The succession planning team screens all applications, determining which candidates will move on to the next phase of the program. The team looks for evidence of increasing levels of responsibility and strength in leadership qualities such as communication, decision making, dependability, flexibility, innovation, and judgment. In addition, applicants and their supervisors are asked to assess the employee's skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Assessment Phase. The assessment phase involves a more practical determination of whether employees are ready to deal successfully with the challenges presented by moving into higher-level positions. Employees often seek promotions for the increased

status and salary, but this phase highlights the changing skill sets needed at different levels of responsibility. Technically proficient employees who are promoted to managerial positions do not always succeed, perhaps because technical competence does not necessarily translate into interpersonal competence. To ensure a fit between skill sets and position requirements, candidates take part in full-day assessments, participating in exercises written to next-level position requirements. These include in-basket exercises, leaderless group discussions, and opportunities to resolve conflict through communication. Participants are evaluated by experts from other public- and private-sector organizations to preserve objectivity. These experts provide the succession planning team with detailed evaluations, which they use in making selections. The candidates and their immediate supervisors must also submit competency evaluations. The process begins in July and is completed by November. Candidates are notified of selections, and the next phase—development—begins in January of the following year. The program receives an average of 25 applications a year. From this pool, ten to fifteen employees are selected to proceed to the assessment phase, and four to ten employees are selected as participants.

Development Phase. The development phase is where the participants' work truly begins—and continues. An atmosphere of camaraderie promotes open communication, intensive learning, generation of previously untapped ideas, and encouragement of synergy that will continue beyond the 12-month development phase. Participants must complete 300 hours of work for the curriculum, in addition to their normal work assignments, so successfully completing the program requires commitment and engagement. The basic curriculum was developed by the human resources director and the program consultant. A major component of the participants' work is a group project: Under the direction of the program director, the group researches a topic and presents recommendations to the mayor, city council, and executive directors for implementation. The curriculum is challenging, reflecting the realities of excelling in a rapidly changing and demanding environment.

Plano's MP3 has been effective in developing internal talent and implementing a succession program. This model has other latent values, and served the city well in other

endeavors. One example is a post Hurricane Katrina issue facing the city, the large influx of evacuees. Several of the MP3 graduates used their past experience by collaborating with other city departments, and developed a unified and organized approach to successfully managing the city's Katrina Hurricane Housing Response Initiative. Participants that were promoted into next-level positions have proven to be well-prepared to meet the demands faced by municipalities.

The program has achieved success without requiring large financial expenditures. As with any successful initiative, there have been both expected and unanticipated outcomes. According to Ross, the program's unanticipated benefits include:

- Enhanced communication throughout the organization and between departments.
- Group projects resulting in long-term process improvements.
- Availability of work teams (cohorts) to work as consultants to the organization from concept to completion.
- Introduction of monthly Mentoring Circles and Issues Forums. The program's approach to learning initially centered on seminar instruction, coaching, and dialogues, but there appeared to be a need to continue the dialogues beyond the one-year program. The Mentoring Circles and Issues Forums were formed as an opportunity for program graduates to continue their development and share ideas and executive-level information. These two aspects were expanded to include the city's executive team.
- Addition of a Department of Sustainability and plans for Plano to "Go Green."
- Introduction of a mentoring program in the Parks and Recreation Department. The parks and recreation director, a leading development coach with [MP.sup.3] since the program's inception, implemented this idea as a result of his work with the program.
- Development and implementation of a more accountable and educational program for integrating new employees, the result of an [MP.sup.3] group project.
- Introduction of a competency-based university model, the Plano Institute of Excellence, to promote targeted professional development opportunities at all levels of the organization. The city, in partnership with two universities and two community colleges, provides the institute as a growth opportunity for all employees.

Plano has been successful with MP3, and relies on these four basic premises of their program. (1) Learning, (2) Communicating, (2) Transparency, (4) and Openness throughout the organization. This model is successful because it is custom tailored to fit their needs.

B. CASE STUDY #2

Developing Competent Leaders for the Future

– U.S. Army

Succession planning has been an institutional process in the U.S. Army for over 230 years. Developing soldiers for the next generation, battle or crisis is the hallmark of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The development of officers gives “character and competence” pride of place in its officer development doctrine. In his commencement speech to the Corps of Cadets, General Schwarzkopf (ret) emphasizes these two most important aspects of an officer. In popular usage, competent means having requisite or adequate ability, and in a labor market context, it is defined as “an enduring combination of characteristics that causes an appropriate level of individual performance” (Berger, 2004).

General Eric Shinseki, chief of staff of the United States Army from 1999 to 2003, once wrote that the army knew who its leaders would be over the upcoming decades—it just did not know their names yet. They could be found among the second lieutenants, first lieutenants, and majors currently serving. Shinseki wrote that although the army could attempt to identify them, over the intervening decades those identified could fade from sight through retirement, new careers, differing priorities, death, or other unexpected circumstances.

Consequently, Shinseki explained that the only approach he could reasonably take was to ensure that as many junior officers as possible received repeated opportunities to obtain new experiences and face new challenges. Since the army promoted solely from within, it was imperative that it become a premier learning organization. The army had to ensure that officers were continually challenged and prepared to meet strategic

challenges, not just tactical ones. Not doing so, Shinseki said, harmed not only the individual officer but also the organization as a whole (Poulin, 2009).

The need to develop tactical leaders into strategic leaders and to empower them to lead in such a challenging environment has never been more apparent. Strategic leaders responsible for large organizations, thousands of people, and vast resources cannot rely on lower level leadership skills for future success.

—Colonel Michael Flowers, U.S. Army Director, Center for Army Leadership, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

The ambiguity of contemporary crises and military events demands that the Army begin developing officers early in their careers who can predict second- and third-order effects; negotiate; understand globalization; build consensus; analyze complex and ambiguous situations; think innovatively and critically; and communicate effectively (Wardynski, Lyle, & Colarusso, 2009).

The army is meeting the challenges of the next century through many initiatives such as Force XXI, Army 2010, and the Army After Next. To develop leaders and officers to take on these challenges, the Chief of Staff of the army, General Dennis J. Reimer, convened the Office of Personnel Management System XXI (OPMS XXI) Task Force in July 1996. Their charter was to review and update the current OPMS to ensure its future responsiveness and to meet the succession planning challenges of the 21st century, i.e., XXI.

The mission of OPMS XXI is to manage officers through the personnel life cycles, i.e., structure, acquire, develop, distribute, deploy, sustain, compensate and separate, consistent with army needs. Using a multi tiered approach, the army incorporates OPMS XXI and the foundation of the Officer Development System (ODS), and enhances the Officer Evaluation Reporting system (OER).(AR 623-1, AR 623-105, and DA Pam 623-105.)

The primary function of the Officer Evaluation Reporting system is to provide information from the organizational chain of command to be used by Headquarters

Department of the Army (HQDA) for officer personnel decisions. The information contained in the OER is correlated with the Army's needs and individual officer qualifications to provide the basis for the OPMS XXI personnel actions such as promotion, Career Field designation, elimination, retention in grade, retention on active duty, reduction in force, command and project manager designation, school selection, assignment and specialty designation.

An equally important function of the Officer Evaluation Reporting System is to encourage the professional development of the officer corps. To accomplish this, the system uses the Army's leadership doctrine to relate teaching, coaching, counseling and assessing values, attributes, skills and actions to performance and professional development. Another successful program is the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) database and Web page, which enhances education and provides soldiers access to educational opportunities. Using technology and virtual classrooms, the army leverages this medium to develop its future leaders. Education is a core essential in the U.S. Army; striking a balance between the strategic level of experience and education enhances officer development.

The OER also requires rater and senior rater input regarding functional areas and Career Fields, unique/special qualifications and future positions that strongly support OPMS XXI indoctrination throughout the officer corps. Particularly valuable is the developmental counseling fostered through senior officers, linking the Army's evaluation system to its leader development and personnel management systems. Developmental counseling is the responsibility of senior officers to provide feedback concerning professional growth, potential and career pathways to success. While these aspects of developmental counseling through mentorship have always been a major element of the evaluation process, they must be continually emphasized.

The support form process of the Officer Evaluation Reporting System provides further impetus to continual two-way communication. The rated officer is made aware of the specific nature of his or her duties, and is provided an opportunity to participate in the organizational planning process. The rater uses the communication to give direction and development to subordinates, to obtain information about the status and progress of the

organization, and to systematically plan for accomplishing the mission. The senior/subordinate communication process also facilitates career guidance for the rated officer, including the decision process for his or her future career field. This enables the rated officer to take advantage of the superior's experience when making functional area, career field or assignment related decisions. The Army's OPMS XXI concepts and recommendations remain relevant and responsive because they are designed to evolve as requirements change through an annual review, feedback, and update process.

Leadership is at the core of army succession planning; the army uses the FM 6-22 manual, which uses the BE-KNOW-DO concept to express what is required of army leaders. As stated in the FM 6-22, it is critical that army leaders be agile, multi-skilled *pentathletes* who have strong moral character, broad knowledge, and keen intellect. Army leaders must be committed to lifelong learning to remain relevant and ready during a career of service to the nation. The FM 6-22 is the Army's keystone field manual on leadership. It establishes leadership doctrine and fundamental principles for all officers, noncommissioned officers, and army-affiliated civilians across all components. The FM 6-22 establishes succession planning early in a soldier's military career.

Chapters 11 and 12 of FM 6-22 discuss leading at the organizational and strategic level. All professional Army leaders consistently prepare themselves for greater responsibilities while mastering core leader competencies. By the time they become organizational and strategic leaders, they should be multi-skilled leaders who can comfortably operate at all levels of leadership, and apply their vast experiences and knowledge for success across the spectrum of conflicts. They oversee continuous transformation of the army, and respond to evolving operational environments. They also mentor and develop the leadership of the future force.

C. CASE STUDY #3

The New York State Department of Civil Service developed an eight-step succession planning guide that is designed to assist agencies with getting the right people in the right jobs at the right time.

Step one is *scope*, choosing a manageable scope is the first step in the process. The scope should be something that can be accomplished within a reasonable period of time or build upon an existing program. The scope should involve the issue, initiative, and organization.

The issue deals with a particular title or occupation within your workforce. Issues can have short-term and long-term implications, such as recruitment, promotions, or job re-designs. The initiative within the scope of work should be supported by the strategic or operational plan of the organization. Finally, the organization can be broken down into a division, unit, or bureau in order to systematically plan and accomplish the staffing needs of that particular segment.

The second step is *context*, which is a method to analyze the environment in which a business operates. Context analysis considers the entire environment of a business, its internal and external environment. This is an important aspect of business planning. One kind of context analysis is called SWOT⁴ (Strength Weakness Opportunities Threats) analysis. Context allows an organization to assess where succession planning can have the most impact on an agency's service delivery.

The third step is *work*. The purpose of this step is to clearly identify the functions that need to be staffed within the chosen scope. The focus of work is on the functions, and not on the people doing the work. The process begins with a clear understanding of the existing functions of the organization in order to determine the future functions. There are several questions that one might use to determine the future functions of the organization. What services may be discontinued or outsourced? Which functions will remain unchanged? How will existing services be enhanced or changed? What technology changes will be made or new technologies introduced?

The fourth step is *demand*. This step focuses on the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required by current or future employees to perform the work tasks. The state of New York and other agencies in other states have developed core competency

⁴ SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project, and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective.

requirements as part of a position description. Using surveys and other information gathering, an agency can tailor the KSAs specific to the current or future positions.

The fifth step is *supply*. This involves profiling the current workforce and determining the current and future expected attrition. The supply is dependent on the attrition rate, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the current workforce. To effectively determine your supply, a gap analysis must be conducted on the organization.

The six step is *gaps*. Gap analysis involves comparing the expected staffing needs with the projected supply, and identifying the gaps. Three steps that are highly effective in performing a gap analysis are: (1) excess staff performing obsolete or declining functions, or functions likely to be outsourced. (2) inadequate supply of qualified people for positions and titles that will likely remain the same; and (3) inadequate supply of people with needed skill sets for positions that may require further classification action.

The seventh step is *priority*, which involves prioritizing the gaps in terms of the largest impact on the success of your agency. Through prioritization, an organization can fill their most critical staffing needs and focus their efforts on developing the workforce for future vacancies.

The eighth and final step provides *solutions*. Based on your priority staffing needs, you determine staff resources and other costs associated with addressing the problems identified in the gap analysis. The solutions fall into six broad categories: (1) position classification actions;. (2) staff development strategies; (3) recruitment/selection strategies; (4) retention strategies; (5) organizational interventions, and (6) knowledge transfer strategies.

The eight-step model found in the State of New York provides a framework to develop a succession plan. The most important aspect of this plan is to conduct a comprehensive gap analysis, comparing actual performance to potential performance, in order to achieve a successful outcome.

D. DATA ANALYSIS

Using the four goals as measurements of assessment—development, identification, and selection along with the twenty-two subordinate objectives—the three case studies were plotted on a chart to determine whether the case evidence could be corroborated across the data sets.

Table 1. Data Analysis Chart

Assessment	U.S. Army	Plano, Texas	New York State
Forecast Vacancies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Identification of Current Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes
Identification of Future Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes
Develop Core Competencies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employee Data Base	Yes	No	No
Employee Surveys	No	Yes	Yes
Development			
Education	Yes	Yes	Yes
Training	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leadership Development	Yes	Yes	Yes
Job Shadowing	Yes	Yes	Yes
360* Evaluations	No	Yes	No
Mentoring	Yes	Yes	Yes
Task Force Assignments	Yes	Yes	No
Identification			
Work Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes
Performance Evaluations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Professional Degrees/Certifications	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employee Potential	Yes	Yes	Yes
Selection			
Examinations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interviews	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessment Center	No	Yes	No
Outside Evaluation	No	Yes	No
Temporary Appointment/Probation	No	Yes	Yes
Overall Score	77%	95%	77%

The analysis of the three case studies showed that assessment, development, identification, and selection were common in each of the agency's succession plan. Furthermore, of the 22 subordinate objectives, each agency applied over three quarters of these in their succession plan.

This analysis demonstrates that a succession plan that includes assessment, development, identification, and selection—along with 22 subordinate objectives—is an effective and acceptable succession plan.

E. THE UNITED STATES ARMY

Assessment: The U.S. Army's process of documenting and measuring the knowledge skills and attitudes of its soldiers was identified in five of the six areas of evaluation.

1. Forecast vacancies. Through the Office of Personnel Management System (OPMS), the U.S. Army is able to determine the future workforce vacancies through the use of databases and projection software.
2. Identification of current skills. OPMS maintains a database via the Officer Development System (ODS) that captures the current skill set of its workforce.
3. Identification of future skills. OPMS reviews and updates its system to ensure its future responsiveness and skill sets meet the succession planning challenges of the 21st century.
4. Develop core competencies. The U.S. Army uses the field manual on leadership (FM 6-22) to codify the core competencies required of an Army soldier.
5. Employee database. The Officer Evaluation Reporting System is a continual two-way communication so that Army soldiers can update their knowledge skills and abilities into a central database, which provides them an opportunity to participate in the organizational planning process.
6. Employee surveys. The research did not find a specific employee survey.

Development: The U.S. Army creates an environment in which their soldiers can develop their full potential and lead productive creative lives through education, training, and leadership development. This was quantified in six of the seven areas of evaluation.

1. Education. The Army places a high value on education. The U.S. Military Academy West Point accomplishes its mission by developing cadets intellectually, physically, militarily, ethically, spiritually, and socially. West Point is one of several military higher learning institutions.
2. Training. The U.S. Army trains their soldiers for the specific skills necessary to accomplish their tasks.
3. Leadership development. Leadership development is an institutional process in the Army. Developing competent leaders to meet the current and future challenges of the world is accomplished through education, training, and officer development.
4. Job shadowing. The Army prepares its soldiers to step into the next level position by providing them jobs shadowing and acting positions in order to gain practical experience.
5. 360 evaluations. The research did not find the use of these types of evaluations in the U.S. Army.
6. Mentoring. A key component to officer development is teaching your job to the one below you and learning the job of the one above you. Several examples of mentoring were found throughout the case study.
7. Task force assignments. The Goldwater Nichols act set the formal adoption of task force assignments. By developing these joint assignments all military officers will gain an appreciation and understanding how the services could and should operate together in future conflicts.

Identification: The Army uses a process on which a soldier's performance can be measured against a clear set of objectives. This was quantified in four of the four areas of evaluation.

1. Work experience. OPMS tracks and monitors the various field and staff assignments of U.S. Army soldiers.
2. Performance evaluations. Through the Officer evaluation reporting system, the U.S. Army identifies strengths and areas of improvement in their soldiers.
3. Professional degrees/certifications. Education and learning are a lifelong process. The U.S. Army encourages and in many cases directs its soldiers to continually seek and develop themselves personally and professionally.
4. Employee potential. Officers are recommended for promotion by their commanders, and are selected by centralized (service-wide) promotion boards,

who make promotion determinations based upon the officers' promotion records, evaluation records and future potential.

Selection: The process for choosing Army soldiers through examination assessment and outside evaluation is accomplished through several methods. This was quantified in two of the five areas of evaluation.

1. Examinations. Army soldiers are tested and evaluated in both practical and didactic settings.
2. Interviews. During the selection process, interview panels conduct interactive discussions and question-and-answer processes for evaluating candidates.
3. Assessment centers. The research did not find the use of assessment centers in Army for the purposes of selection.
4. Outside evaluation. Other than joint services with other military branches, the research did not find the use of outside evaluation for the purposes of selection.
5. Temporary appointment/probation. The research did not find the use of temporary appointments and probation periods for Army soldiers.

F. THE CITY OF PLANO, TEXAS

Assessment: Plano's process of documenting and measuring the knowledge skills and attitudes of its employees was quantified in five of the six areas of evaluation.

1. Forecast vacancies. Using the Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP3), the city was able to determine the future workforce vacancies through the use of databases and projection from their human resource office.
2. Identification of current skills. Employees submit resumes to the HR department and MP3 maintains a database that captures the current skill sets of its workforce.
3. Identification of future skills. A succession planning team from MP3 assesses the current and future skills needs for the city of Plano.
4. Develop core competencies. Core competencies and teaching curriculums are developed by the human resources director and program consultant.

5. Employee database. The research did not find the use of employee databases.
6. Employee surveys. Plano uses surveys to gather employee feedback, assessments, and recommendations.

Development: The City of Plano creates an environment in which their employees can develop into their full potential and lead productive creative lives through education, training, and leadership development. This was quantified in seven of the seven areas of evaluation.

1. Education. Plano places a high value on education. The city developed the Plano Institute of Excellence to promote targeted professional development opportunities at all levels of the organization.
2. Training. Plano provides training to their employees for the specific skills necessary to accomplish their tasks.
3. Leadership development. Leadership development is key component in Plano. Developing competent leaders to meet the current and future challenges of the city is accomplished through education, training, mentoring circles and employee development.
4. Job shadowing. Plano prepares its employees to step into the next level position by providing them jobs shadowing and acting positions in order to gain practical experience.
5. 360 evaluations. Plano uses these types of evaluations to enhance communication throughout the organization and improve performance through peer evaluations.
6. Mentoring. A key component to employee development is job mentoring. Plano places extreme value on the relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate in order to create a mentoring environment. Several examples of mentoring were found throughout the case study.
7. Task force assignments. Plano developed group projects that resulted in long-term process improvements. Employees worked with other departments in the city which enhanced their organizational experience.

Identification: Plano uses a process on which an employee's performance can be measured against a clear set of objectives. This was quantified in four of the four areas of evaluation.

1. Work experience. MP3 tracks and monitors the various projects and staff assignments of Plano employees.
2. Performance evaluations. The employee's immediate supervisor submits evaluations that are used to determine.
3. Professional degrees/certifications. Education and learning are a continuum in Plano. Plano encourages and in many cases directs its employees to continually seek and develop themselves personally and professionally.
4. Employee potential. Employees are screened and selected by succession planning team, who make selections and determinations based on the employee's competency and detailed evaluations.

Selection: The process for choosing employees through examination assessment and outside evaluation is accomplished through several methods. This was quantified in five of the five areas of evaluation.

1. Examinations. Employees are tested and evaluated in both practical and didactic settings.
2. Interviews. During the selection process, interview panels conduct interactive discussions and question-and-answer processes for evaluating candidates.
3. Assessment centers. Plano uses assessments centers and in basket exercises to evaluate employees.
4. Outside evaluation. Participants are evaluated by experts from other public and private sector organizations to preserve and maintain objectivity.
5. Temporary appointment/probation. The research did not find the use of temporary appointments and probation periods for employees. However, employees who participate in MP3 need to complete the 12 month 300 hours of course curriculum in addition to their normal work assignments. Successfully completing the program requires commitment and engagement.

G. NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL SERVICE (NEW YORK)

Assessment: New York's process of documenting and measuring the knowledge skills and attitudes of its employees was quantified in five of the six areas of evaluation.

1. Forecast vacancies. Through the use of the data retrieved from the civil service department, the state was able to determine the future workforce vacancies and priority staffing needs.
2. Identification of current skills. Through the use of surveys and other information gathering tools, the state is able identify the function and skills of the current workforce.
3. Identification of future skills. The state refers to this as "demand" that focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities required by the current or future employees to perform the work tasks.
4. Develop core competencies. Core competencies and teaching curriculums are developed by the state as part of a position description.
5. Employee database. The research did not find the use of employee databases.
6. Employee surveys. The state uses surveys to gather employee feedback, assessments, and recommendations.

Development: The State of New York creates an environment in which their employees can develop into their full potential and lead productive creative lives through education, training, and leadership development. This was quantified in five of the seven areas of evaluation.

1. Education. Staff development strategies that include education are part of the development phase. The case study did not expand specific educational requirements but makes mention of the importance of employee development.
2. Training. Through a gap analysis the state determines what areas of employee training are lacking and offers training and development opportunities.

3. Leadership development. The case study did not identify leadership development as a key component, however based on their eight-step model for succession planning one can deduce that leadership is certainly an important part of their state's succession plan.
4. Job shadowing. The state prepares its employees to step into the next level position by providing them jobs shadowing and acting positions in order to gain practical experience.
5. 360 evaluations. The research did not find the use of these types of the evaluations.
6. Mentoring. Part of the state's staff development strategy includes the role mentoring.
7. Task force assignments. The research did not find the use of task force assignments as part of the succession plan.

Identification: Plano uses a process on which an employee's performance can be measured against a clear set of objectives. This was quantified in four of the four areas of evaluation.

1. Work experience. The state succession planning guide takes into account employees work experience as part of their recruitment and selection strategies.
2. Performance evaluations. The state uses employee performance evaluations as part of their assessment.
3. Professional degrees/certifications. The state encourages staff development through professional training and acquiring certifications.
4. Employee potential. While individual employee potential was not discussing the case study, the state evaluates its workforce and looks at the current knowledge skills and abilities in order to fulfill the future projected needs.

Selection: The process for choosing employees through examination assessment and outside evaluation is accomplished through several methods. This was quantified in three of the five areas of evaluation.

1. Examinations. Employees are tested and evaluated in both practical and didactic settings.
2. Interviews. During the selection process, interview panels conduct interactive discussions and question-and-answer processes for evaluating candidates.
3. Assessment centers. The research did not find the use of assessments centers as part of their succession planning guide.
4. Outside evaluation. The research did not find the use of outside evaluation as part of their succession planning guide.
5. Temporary appointment/probation. As part of the selection process, the state civil service does have temporary appointments and probationary periods.

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VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature review, the analysis of the three case studies and this author's personal observations with over twenty years of experience in the fire service, the following succession planning guide may provide the LAFD a foundation on which to develop a succession plan.

A. SUCCESSION PLANNING GUIDE FOR THE LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

Assessment: By conducting a department wide assessment aimed at measuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its employees, the department can gain a better understanding of the current skill sets of the department.

1. Forecast vacancies. Through the department's human resource division it is able to determine the future workforce vacancies through the use of databases that anticipate future retirements.
2. Identification of current skills. The department should develop an organizational analysis measurement that shows the current skill set of the workforce.
3. Identification of future skills. Future oriented job analysis is a process that identifies skill sets necessary for future challenges. By looking towards the future the department can develop and anticipate the type of skill sets necessary for the future and test for them as well.
4. Develop core competencies. Each position in the department should have a well defined set of core competencies that each employee can refer to and fully understand the expectations necessary to carry out the goals and mission of the department.
5. Employee database. The department should develop an employee database that captures the knowledge, skills, training, and education of every employee on the department. Through a central database employees can upload their resumes which will allow the department the ability to draw on the strengths of its employees and provide them an opportunity to participate in the organizational planning process.

6. Employee surveys. This form of organizational analysis will measure the employee's attitudes, opinions, motivation, and satisfaction.

Development: Through this phase, the department can create an environment in which their employees can develop their full potential and lead productive creative lives through education, training, and leadership development. Development is the most important phase in creating a resilient and sustainable workforce.

1. Education. Current department leadership has placed a high value on education. Education has a formative effect on the mind that enhances individual's ability to think critically, creatively, and imaginatively. The adaptive challenges that are faced by the Department require a well-educated workforce.
2. Training. Training has been an institutional process in the department for over 125 years. Learning specific skills and the practice of building these certain skills is often times meant to replicate behaviors necessary to accomplish tasks.
3. Leadership development. Formal leadership training and development in the department was a recommendation from the 2005 Controllers Audit. Developing competent leaders to meet the current and future challenges of the world is accomplished through education, training, and fire officer development.
4. Job shadowing. The department prepares its employees to step into the next level position by providing them jobs shadowing and acting positions in order to gain practical experience.
5. 360 evaluations. This type of evaluation should be formally recognized and adopted within the department. Through the use of peer evaluations supervisors and subordinates can evaluate each other and raise the overall level of trust and competency department wide.
6. Mentoring. A key component to employee development is job mentoring. Currently this process is informal and is dependent on the initiatives of the supervisor and subordinate.
7. Task force assignments. The department does a very good job of providing employees the opportunity to work on other projects and within other bureaus of the department. These assignments provide an employee an opportunity to gain total organizational awareness.

Identification: The department uses a process on which an employee's performance can be measured against a clear set of objectives.

1. Work experience. The department tracks and documents an employee's work experience using MITS, an online database that maintains employee's records.
2. Performance evaluations. The department uses performance evaluations for merit pay advancements and to document performance. There should be an increased use of the evaluations in other areas including promotions and selection to key positions.
3. Professional degrees/certifications. The department should set requirements for obtaining degrees and certifications in order to achieve or be considered for certain positions. Currently there are certain technical fields that do have these requirements, but this should be considered department wide.
4. Employee potential. The department should develop a system that identifies high potential employees.

Selection: The process for choosing employees through examination assessment and outside evaluation is accomplished through several methods.

1. Examinations. Employees are tested and evaluated in both practical and didactic settings.
2. Interviews. During the selection process, interview panels conduct interactive discussions and question-and-answer processes for evaluating candidates.
3. Assessment centers. The Department uses assessment centers for the purposes of evaluation.
4. Outside evaluation. The department uses outside evaluators during promotional exams. This method when combined with internal evaluators provides a fair and objective process.
5. Temporary appointment/probation. The department has formal probationary periods for civil service classifications, but could adopt this model for special duty/administrative assignments.

Table 2. LAFD Succession Planning Assessment Chart

Assessment	LAFD
Forecast Vacancies	Yes
Identification of Current Skills	No
Identification of Future Skills	No
Develop Core Competencies	Partial
Employee Data Base	No
Employee Surveys	No
Development	
Education	Yes
Training	Yes
Leadership Development	Yes
Job Shadowing	Yes
360* Evaluations	Partial
Mentoring	Partial
Task Force Assignments	Yes
Identification	
Work Experience	Yes
Performance Evaluations	Partial
Professional Degrees/Certifications	Partial
Employee Potential	No
Selection	
Examinations	Yes
Interviews	Yes
Assessment Center	Yes
Outside Evaluation	Yes
Temporary Appointment/Probation	Yes
Score	59%

VII. CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis was to develop a succession planning guide designed to ensure the seamless transfer of knowledge to the next generation of employees. As the workforce demographics of the LAFD shift, the overall level of experience, skills, and wisdom will diminish department wide. Preserving this experience and passing it on to the next generation will ensure that our workforce and our nations' first responders will be prepared and capable to deal with the complexities of the future and man-made or natural catastrophes. The ability to draw on past experience, recognize patterns, and apply solutions is part of the decision-making model when faced with these complex issues.

There are two trends in the distribution of employee characteristics in the LAFD; each presents a challenge to accomplishing the succession needs of the department. First, mass retirements of baby-boom employees have made the LAFD younger and less experienced. Second, LAFD employees are becoming more culturally and generationally diverse.

The LAFD will lose 40% of the command officers and 23% of the workforce through retirements in the next five years, leaving a very significant labor and management void to fill. This pending drain of experience and knowledge will directly affect the operational capabilities of department as well as our nation's homeland security. Without comprehensive succession planning, this institutional memory is likely to be lost.

Given the drastic shift in the age distribution of the U.S. population over the past few decades the department's workforce is younger which has led to a loss of experience and judgment. This young workforce is unique and diverse in so many ways; workplace diversity adds depth, breadth and scope to the organization. But it also has the potential to adversely affect individual and group performance, creating obstacles which may impede attaining organizational goals. Younger workers have different values and attitudes towards their job and their employers than their predecessors. Understanding generational

differences may enable department management to structure strategies and transformation techniques, motivating employees to the full extent of their skills.

To address both of these trends the department can adopt and formalize a succession plan aimed at developing employees and leveraging the unique and diverse skill sets found in the new generation of employees.

Succession planning is an effective means to preserving institutional memory and improving institutional knowledge. Succession plans are designed to identify and select best-fit candidates for leadership positions, assure effective leadership development, and preserve organizational knowledge and intellectual capital. It is the method that an organization must employ to ensure “the right people in the right places at the right times.” By doing so, succession planning also lessens the effect of downsizing, given the change in the global economy succession plans will ensure that key positions which have been eliminated can be filled or absorbed by other employees.

The fire department is a government organization with civil service guidelines. There are those within the fire service who feel that the rules of civil service are barriers to implementing succession plans. The research shows that civil service rules can actually enhance and improve succession planning. What is unique to the fire department versus the private sector is that fire department promotions are based on examinations. This can certainly improve succession planning if the exams are relevant and designed to test candidates for skill sets that are current and practical. Additional research should be made in the area of civil service examinations and their application to the fire department.

Leadership is the single most important factor in motivating employees and improving productivity. Leadership is a fundamental component of organizational management. Drawing a distinction, *appointments*hip is the granting of power through an external authority over people, whereas leadership is concerned with inner processes, where people are ready and willing to be influenced by another person. The fire department has made great strides in developing leaders throughout the organization. Programs such as the LAFD leadership Academy have raised the level of fitness and performance in fire officer ranks in the department.

Succession planning should also target a specific group, rank, or skill set. One such group is the first line officer or fire captain. More than any other position in the department, the fire captain takes the department's mission statement and turns it into a reality. These first-line leaders are the primary keepers and trainers of the organization's culture they influence the workforce more than any other rank can hope to; they are the organization's future. The department should continue its efforts to develop officers, specifically the rank of fire captain.

The findings of this thesis point to four areas that should be adopted by the department and included in a succession plan.

A. FOUR-POINT PLAN

1. Assessment

Assessment, the process of documenting—usually in measurable terms—knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs, can focus on the individual employee, the community, or the department as a whole. The assessment phase provides situational awareness and gives you insight into the fitness of your department.

2. Development

Development creates an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests, thus bringing the focus back onto people. This is the most important aspect of succession planning. By developing the organization as a whole, you build your “bench strength” and ensure that you have a large able pool of candidates ready to step into the next position, whether it is a horizontal move or a vertical move. Given the impact of the global economy, developing your workforce will ensure that during times of downsizing you will have highly trained employees ready to assume the duties of positions that have been eliminated or shifted to other parts of the workforce.

3. Identification

The ability to visualize your workforce and find those employees who stand out above the rest is crucial for the long-term success of the organization. Identification needs to be measure against a clear set of objectives that everybody knows and understands. Too many times, the goals and objectives of employee performance are ambiguous and create a climate that breeds mistrust or apathy. By ensuring that all employees understand their roles and responsibilities, the process of identification becomes rather clear to all of the candidates vying for those key positions.

4. Selection

The process for choosing employees through examination, assessment, or outside evaluation is the final step. Selecting the right employee is a challenging process that if accomplished correctly pays you back in employee productivity, a successful employment relationship, and a positive impact on your total work environment. Selecting the right employee enhances your work culture and ensures high employee morale. Selecting the wrong employee is expensive, costly to your work environment, and time consuming. By developing a transparent selection process, you can instill trust in the organization and improve employee motivation.

In today's world, the workforce is an organization's most important asset, often differentiating highly successful agencies from those that struggle. Yet, in the ongoing effort to develop a strong and capable workforce, many organizations focus almost entirely on hiring and training. They neglect succession planning which is perhaps the most essential ingredient in building an organization that is capable of achieving its strategic goals.

Succession planning requires more than just an organizational chart showing who holds what job within the department and when that job will become vacant. Best practice organizations use succession planning to develop and maintain strong leadership and to ensure that they address all the skills and competencies required for today's

operating environment and prepare the leadership for the future. Succession planning can also be an extremely powerful tool in motivating and developing the workforce.

The research showed that succession planning is an ongoing, dynamic process that helps an organization to align its goals with its human capital needs. It also ensures that the fire service can keep pace with the complexities in homeland security. A succession plan is not a static document that you retrieve in case of an emergency; it is dynamic and evolves over time to fit the needs of the organization.

To achieve outstanding results using succession planning, the Los Angeles Fire Department must develop an effective and highly focused succession plan that centers on organizational excellence.

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